

Worthing Gazette 12/8/14

CITIZENS' PROTECTION CORPS

Its Object.

To Assist in the Preservation of Order.

Convened by Mrs. Guy Michell, after consultation with a few other residents, a largely attended and enthusiastic public meeting was held at Mitchell's Restaurant, in Chapel-road, on Wednesday evening to consider what local measures should be taken in the event of certain possibilities in connection with the War, and incident-

ally the formation of a Citizens' Protection Corps.

The Mayor (Alderman R. Piper, J.P.) took the Chair, and in view of the crowded character of the meeting a suggestion was made at the outset that the proceedings should be adjourned to the Town Hall, but inasmuch as that building would not have provided much more accommodation, it was wisely decided not to make any change.

In the course of a brief introductory speech the MAYOR observed that he was sure they had

Every Confidence in the Government.

It was not very often he did agree with the present Government—old Tory as he was—but he candidly confessed that he did not think any Government could have done better work than the present one had done in the circumstances. They had done their utmost to prevent war spreading, and now that the country was at war he had no doubt they would do all they could to bring it to a successful issue (hear, hear). They had already taken steps with regard to the currency and to the food supply, and what was wanted now was for the townspeople to keep their heads and be as optimistic as they could. There would, no doubt, be some distress in the town, and it would be their duty to look after the families of the men who had left Worthing to join the Flag. Also when the time came money would have to be found to

Relieve Distress.

but there was no occasion for them to go round looking for distress (hear, hear). His Worship also strongly deprecated the laying in of large stocks of provisions, pointing out that this only tended to

raise prices, with the result that the poor, who lived from hand to mouth, suffered most.

Colonel Sir DUNCAN JOHNSTON remarked that although they had nothing to fear in the present crisis, they ought to make proper arrangements beforehand, and not let difficulties which might arise catch them unawares. The object some of them had had in calling that meeting was the strengthening of the hands of the civil authorities by offering to help them if they required it. The difficulties of the Police, for instance, would be enormously increased during the War. The price of food was going up, and there would be a difficulty in finding employment. With a large number of people out of work and the means of

feeding them limited they would have the elements of trouble, in addition to which there was always a floating population of undesirable characters. If the latter knew, however, that Worthing had made

Thorough and Complete Arrangements for dealing with them, they would go elsewhere. Sir Duncan went on to explain that there was no desire to gather in any young men who might be eligible to serve in the Army, Navy, or Territorials. He proposed that it was desirable to take steps to assist the Civil Authorities during the War by the appointment of a Civil Protection Corps or otherwise.

Major W. R. PRICKETT seconded.

The MAYOR was sorry he could not support this proposal, as he thought it would make the public think things were a great deal worse than they were. The Chief Constable was appointing a large number of Special Constables, enough to meet any emergency; and in the interests of the town he considered it better that Special Constables should be appointed by the proper authority than at a public meeting. He suggested that they should

stay their hand for a few days, and give the Chief Constable time to do what he thought was necessary for the safety of the town.

To Help, and Not to Hinder!

Mrs. MICHELL explained that she had

been in communication with the Chief Constable, and she had consulted the Police before calling that meeting. The local Superintendent had told her that he wanted all the help they could give.

Sir DUNCAN JOHNSTON reiterated that they wished to help and not to hinder or interfere with the Police.

In the course of the subsequent proceedings a working man in the meeting expressed the hope that the ladies present would refrain from buying up the food supplies. Otherwise, he said, the workers would have to go short (hear, hear).

The resolution was eventually put to the meeting and carried; and it was also agreed that Sir Pelham Warren, General Hobday, Sir Duncan Johnstone, Major

Prickett, and Mr. J. Rodocanachi should be constituted a Committee, with power to add to their number.